

Film adds new dimension to Swift

By Kunal Mehta
SCIENCE & TECH EDITOR

From the time between the release of her 2017 album, “reputation,” and last year’s drop of “Lover,” Taylor Swift largely stayed out of the public spotlight.

Her silence left room for rumors to grow, leaving her fans with questions.

But in her new Netflix documentary, “Miss Americana,” she provides Swifties with all the answers they’ve been desiring across a wide array of rather personal topics.

Director Lana Wilson and Swift don’t shy away from controversial topics, first addressing the subject the public wants to know about the most: the feud with Kanye West. Or maybe it should be called West’s harassment of Swift.

She retold the 2009 incident in which West infamously interrupted her receiving the MTV Video Music Award for “Best Female Video” to let everyone know that “Beyoncé had one of the best music videos of all time!”

When the crowd started booing, then-20-year-old Swift thought they were booing her, which would understandably be soul-crushing for someone who relies heavily on the approval of her fans.

She explains that the humiliation she felt drove her to do better, ostensibly leading to her receiving the album of the year Grammy for “1989” a few years later. But that drive was

unsustainable, especially during her mother’s fight with cancer, giving her a new perspective.

“Do you really care if the Internet doesn’t like you today if your mom is sick from her chemo?” Swift asks.

She builds upon that idea of not caring what the general public thinks, explaining it was a conscious decision to keep her latest relationship private from the world.

And true to her intentions, there are barely any shots of her boyfriend, Joe Alwyn, in the documentary, even during the parts where he is being discussed.

As the documentary progresses, she includes snippets of her working with producer Joel Little on different “Lover”

tracks, showing their development from her initial lyrics to the final tracks.

In one scene in the studio, Swift reveals a secret that will surprise her Californian fans: she tried her first burrito at age 27.

But once she begins discussing her struggle with an eating

disorder, it makes sense that she had never bothered to try one.

“I tend to get triggered by something, whether it’s a picture where my tummy looks too big or someone said I look pregnant and that will trigger me and starve,” Swift said.

The most intense moment comes when Swift decides to take a stance in the 2018 U.S. Senate race in Tennessee, publicly opposing

movie review

“Miss Americana”

Rating:
★★★★☆

Director:
Lana Wilson

Starring:
Taylor Swift

Genre:
Documentary

now-Sen. Marsha Blackburn based on her opposition to equal rights for women and the LGBTQ+ community.

Her father expresses his fear of the backlash Swift would face, saying, “I’m terrified. I’m the guy who went out and bought armored cars.”

There’s a dramatic buildup to the moment Swift publishes her post backing Democratic candidate Phil Bredesen, but it ends up being one of the weaker points of the film.

Swifties that were aware of her Instagram post knew exactly what was going to happen and those out of the loop would be confused as to what to expect.

The film heavily relies on archival footage for flashbacks, providing a more authentic, unscripted feeling.

However it can be difficult at times watching vertical videos that were presumably shot on Swift’s phone.

Not all of the older videos are introduced chronologically, leaving viewers using context clues like Swift’s hairstyle or

how pixelated the footage is to figure out when they were recorded.

Swift concludes the documentary by releasing a new single: “Only the Young,” promoting youth activism in the lead-up to the 2020 Presidential election.

Sounding like a generic pop ballad, it feels as if Swift focused more on the concepts rather than developing the music.

By taking such a strong stance in the single and in her political activism in general, Swift is likely to drive away some of her conservative fans, but builds her own strength and confidence.

Being a Swiftie is more than just liking her music though.

It’s about buying into a culture of being true to one’s self, and throughout “Miss Americana,” Taylor Swift doubles down on that ideal.

This well-executed deep dive into Swift’s psyche will endear her more in the hearts of devoted fans, but is unlikely to attract new fans to her following.

Follow Kunal on Twitter | @legoktm



ILLUSTRATION BY MELODY DEL RIO

Corrections

On Tuesday, Feb. 4, the Spartan Daily published a story titled, “Coronavirus reaches county,” in which Dr. Sara Cody’s title should have included Santa Clara County Health Officer and Director.

On Tuesday, Feb. 4, the Spartan Daily published a story titled, “Coronavirus reaches county,” in which Dr. Barbara Fu was misidentified.

On Thursday, Jan. 30, the Spartan Daily published a story titled, “Slashed VTA options lengthen commutes,” which misstated who voted on the reallocation of Measure B funds. The San Jose City Council voted against the funds.

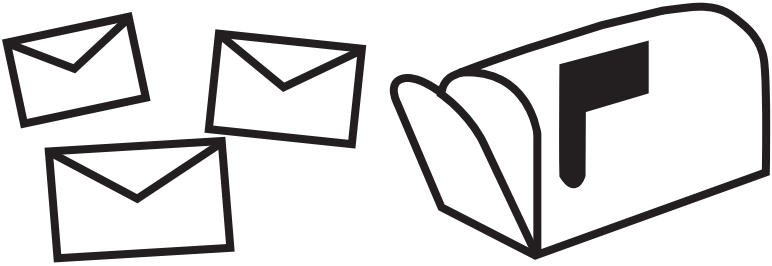
On Thursday, Jan. 30, the Spartan Daily published a story titled, “Photo exhibit challenges perceptions,” in which should have identified Paula Levine as the head of the print media program and a director of the contemporary print research center for the University of California, Santa Cruz.

The Spartan Daily regrets these errors.



Have a story idea?

Contact us at
spartandaily@gmail.com.



– send a letter to the editor –

Letters to the Editor may be placed in the letters to the editor box in the Spartan Daily office in Dwight Bentel Hall, Room 209 or emailed to spartandaily@gmail.com to the attention of the Spartan Daily Opinion Editor.

Letters to the Editor must contain the author’s name, year and major. Letters become property of the Spartan Daily and may be edited for clarity, grammar, libel and length. Only letters of 300 words or less will be considered for publication.

Published opinions and advertisements do not necessarily reflect the views of the Spartan Daily, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication or SJSU. The Spartan Daily is a public forum.

Global Spartan Month

Celebrating SJSU international education and cultural exchange

Events, workshops and contests open to all SJSU students, faculty and staff the month of March.
Become a #GlobalSpartan!

Visit global.sjsu.edu/GSM for a full list of events you won't want to miss.